

Advanced Placement

Language
&
Composition

Development of Fundamental Skills

SYNTAX

Edited and Compiled by Jeffrey Norton

Rules Grammar Change
English Traditional Replaced To Be New Syntax

The ONION June 7, 2000

WASHINGTON, DC—The U.S. Grammar Guild Monday announced that no more will traditional grammar rules English follow. Instead there will a new form of organizing sentences be.

U.S. grammar Guild according to, the new structure loosely on an obscure 800-year-old, pre-medieval Anglo-Saxon syntax is based. The syntax primarily verbs, verb clauses and adjectives at the end of sentences placing involves. Results this often, to ears American, a sentence backward appearing.

“Operating under we are, one major rule,” said Joyce Watters, president of the U.S. Grammar Guild. “Make English; want we, more archaic and dignified sounding to be, as if every word coming from the tongue of a centuries-old, mystical wizard, is.”

Brief pause Watters made than a. “Know I, know I,” said she. “Confusing sounds it, but every American used to it soon will be.”

At a press conference recent greeted warmly the new measure by President Clinton was:

“No longer will we adhere to the dull, predictable structure of our traditional grammar system. This nation will now begin speaking, writing, and listening to something fresh, exciting and different,” said Clinton.

“Excuse me,” added he pause long after a. “Meant I, the dull, predictable system our traditional grammar of adhere to no longer will we. Speaking, writing and listening to something fresh,

exciting and different will this nation now begin.”

This week beginning, America across, all dictionaries, thesauruses and any other books or objects with any sort of writing upon it or in it revised to fit the new system will be. Libraries assure people wish to that the transition promptly begin will, but that patient people should be, as so much to change there is.

“Feel good it will make people to know for all these changes that, librarians cold, crabby and as paranoid and overprotective of their books and periodicals as ever-remain will,” said Yvonne Richter, Director of the Library of Congress.

The enthusiasm of government officials despite, many Americans about the new plan upset are. “Why in the world did they do this?” a New Canaan, CT, insurance salesman, said Brent Pryce. “There’s absolutely no reason. It’s utterly pointless and will cause total chaos throughout the country, not to mention the fact that it will cost billions of dollars to implement. And what’s this U.S. Grammar Guild, anyway? I’ve never heard of it.”

When of this complaint informed, government officials that they could not the man’s words understand said, because of the strange, unintelligible way of speaking he was.

❖ TYPES of SENTENCE by ARRANGEMENT

natural/basic
inverted
loose
periodic
interrupted
parallel
balanced

➤ SYNTACTICAL SCHEMES of CONSTRUCTION

by **Balance/Order/Placement**

parallelism
 isocolon
antithesis
 juxtaposition
 paradox
 oxymoron
listing
transition

by **Omission**

ellipsis
asyndeton

by **Addition/Repetition**

apposition (appositive)
parenthesis
polysyndeton
anaphora
epistrophe
anadiplosis
epanalepsis
antimetabole
chiasmus

Syntactical Style Analysis should include the following elements:

sentence length	sentence beginnings
sentence kind	sentence variety
sentence euphony (rhythm)	sentence coherence
figures of speech	paragraphing/organization

More often than not, SYNTACTICAL SCHEMES are used for
RHYTHM AND/OR EMPHASIS

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

after	although	where
before	though	wherever
during	that	what
while	so that	whatever
once	in order that	why
as	provided that	how
as if	till	who
as long as	until	whom
whether	whereas	whose
if	unless	which
since	when	what
because	whenever	how

Independent , nonessential information, Clause .
 , I believe,
 , on the other hand,
 , however,

Independent essential information Clause .

Independent clause, afterthought .

Independent clause : word, word, word .
 : phrase, phrase, phrase .
 : clause; clause; clause .

4. The increase of smog in the air is attributed to the buildup of factories in areas of greatest contamination.

5. The orchard of apple trees which stood in the area behind the house yielded no fruit during the first year, but it bore a large crop during the second season.

6. Since we were sitting in seats which were near first base, we were able to judge the accuracy of the decisions of the umpire.

7. Our seats in which we sat at the LC-Ferris game were almost on the forty-yard line, and they were at the top of Albi Stadium near the concession stand side.

8. The most common complaint that is made by students of teachers is that every teacher chooses Friday on which to give quizzes.

9. In the last act of the play there is the explanation of the title of the play.

10. In the early part of the month of August there was a really mean hurricane with very high winds that was moving threateningly toward Port Arthur.

Several different models are provided for your study. After each model, write a representative kernel sentence that could have initiated the expansion.

1. Al was out already, unscrewing the steaming radiator cap with the tips of his fingers, jerking his hand away to escape the spurt when the cap should come loose. --- Steinbeck
2. It was hard to keep my eyes open, staring at the road, watching the black blades sweep rhythmically across the windshield, soundlessly flattening against the glass. --- M.J.E.
3. She drank slowly at first, savoring each sip, feeling the coldness on her lips and teeth, tasting the sweetness that turned to sourness as the liquid rolled back on her tongue.
4. And then crying, his head up looking at nothing, carrying himself straight and soldierly, with tears on both his cheeks and biting his lips, he walked past the machines and out the door. --- Hemingway

Expand each of the kernel sentences listed below.

1. Two buzzards sailed.
2. The little birds were working.
3. The sun was coming over the ridge now.
4. He baited a rat trap.
5. The place looked familiar.
6. There lay a stretch of fine green grass.
7. The pony's tracks were plain enough.

Sentence Imitation

Compose one sentence of your own creation – no copying – for each of the following patterns. Underline the requested element.

1. Periodic sentences beginning with the following subordinate elements:
 - a. subordinate clause
 - b. prepositional phrase
 - c. participial phrase
 - d. appositive phrase

2. Loose sentences ending with the following elements:
 - a. subordinate clause
 - b. subordinate clause introduced by a colon
 - c. appositive phrase
 - d. participial phrase

3. Interrupted sentences containing the following interrupters:
 - a. subordinate clause
 - b. preposition phrase
 - c. participial phrase
 - d. appositive phrase

4. Parallel sentences which include:
 - a. two part
 - b. three part
 - c. isocolon
 - d. antithesis

5. One sentence each using the following syntactical schemes:
 - a. anaphora
 - b. epistrophe
 - c. anadiplosis
 - d. epanalepsis

The Periodic Sentence:

This is the sentence in which additional details are added inside the basic structure; it may be broken in two at some point and spread apart to make room for added cargo. Details are dropped into the space between the two parts:

Basic statement:

Love is blind.

Periodic sentence:

Love, as everyone knows except those who happen to be afflicted with it, is blind.

Basic statement:

John gave his mother flowers.

Periodic sentence:

John, the tough one, the sullen kid who scoffed at any show of sentiment, gave his mother flowers.

Delay, of course, is the secret weapon of the periodic sentence. By holding off the final words of the basic sentence until the last possible moment, the sentence builds its own small feeling of suspense. And the reader is carried along almost irresistibly to the end, for exactly the same reason he is carried along by a mystery – because he wants to know “how it comes out.”

The periodic sentence is the most artful of sentences. Its structure has a kind of natural elegance, an air of perfectly controlled movement, of assured grace. Its structure is so distinctive, in fact, that it is not wise to place too many periodic sentences too close together. Space them out with small, tight sentences, for contrast. An occasional periodic sentence can add tension to writing that may otherwise seem loose and casual.

PERIODIC sentences delay the main point until the end. This type of sentence lends a formal tone to what is said, slowing its pace, adding cadence, and making it more serious.

Example:

If you can keep your head when everyone around you is panicking, you probably don't understand the situation.

From the onset of his journey to the heart of darkness, Marlow witnesses many incidents that reveal the human capacity for evil.

Simplistic definition: Periodic has the subject and predicate at the end; loose has it at the beginning.

The Parallel Paragraph

Parallelism is an excellent way to build a paragraph, as well as a sentence. When parallelism is extended throughout a paragraph, each sentence becomes an element in the series and states one aspect of the idea being explored.

America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing but a lack of social will to prevent us from paying adequate wages to schoolteachers, social workers and other servants of the public to insure that we have the best available personnel in these positions which are charged with the responsibility of guiding our future generations. There is nothing but a lack of social vision to prevent us from paying an adequate wage to every American citizen, whether he be a hospital worker, laundry worker, maid or day laborer. There is nothing — except a tragic deathwish—to prevent us from re-ordering our priorities so the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war. There is nothing to keep us from remolding with bruised hands a recalcitrant status quo until we have fashioned it into a brotherhood.

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Where Do We Go from Here?

Find or create examples of parallel sentences or a parallel paragraph and write them here:

The Periodic Paragraph

A writer can create a periodic paragraph by employing the same principle of building to a main clause through dependent parallel constructions.

I guess it is easy for those of you who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say wait. But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your brothers and sisters at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick, brutalize and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an air-tight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her little eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see the depressing clouds of inferiority begin to form in her little mental sky, and see her begin to distort her little personality by unconsciously developing a bitterness towards white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son asking in agonizing pathos: Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?; when you take a cross country drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white men" and "colored men"; when your first name becomes "nigger" and your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title of "Mrs." When you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance never quite knowing what to expect next, and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments, when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of 'nobodiness' – then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait.

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Letter from a Birmingham Jail

The Balanced Paragraph

One can also develop an entire paragraph by balance. This is particularly useful if you are developing a series of contrasts.

I felt myself in rebellion against the Greek concept of justice. The concept excused Laius of attacking Oedipus, but condemned Oedipus for defending himself. It tolerated a king's deliberate attempt to kill his baby son by piercing the infant's feet and abandoning it on a mountain, but later branded the son's unintentional killing of his father as murder. It held Oedipus responsible for his ignorance, but excused those who contributed to that ignorance. (Krutch)

Comparing Parallel structures:

John F. Kennedy

Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans – born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage – and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

To that world assembly of sovereign states, the United Nations, our last, best hope in an age where instruments of war have far outpaced instruments of peace, we renew our pledge of support – to prevent it merely from becoming a forum for invective, to strengthen its shield of the new and the weak, to enlarge the area in which its writ may run.

Abraham Lincoln

Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would *make* war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would *accept* war rather than let it perish.

With malice towards none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up our nations' wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves and with all nations.

But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

“The Broken Globe” Henry Kreisil

Sentence #	First 4 Words	Special Features	Verbs	# of Words in Sentence
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

“The day broke fine and clear. A few white clouds were in the metallic autumn sky and the sun shone coldly down upon the earth, as if from a great distance. I drove south as far as Wetaskiwin and then turned east. The paved highway gave way to gravel and got steadily worse. I was beginning to wonder whether I was going right, when I rounded a bend and a grain elevator hovered like a signpost into view. It was now about three o’clock and I had arrived in Three Bear Hills, but, as Nick had told me, there were neither bears nor hills here, but only prairie, and suddenly the beginning of an embryonic street with a few building on either side like a small island in a vast sea, and then all was prairie again.”

-Comment on your observations after filling out this chart.

Syntax
Diction/Syntax Analysis Practice

Directions: In paragraph 1 the writer tells about his young son's typical days while he was attending a private school. Paragraph 2 is a summary of paragraph 1. Read the two paragraphs and then answer the questions that follow.

Paragraph 1

His days were rich in formal experience. Wearing overalls and an old sweater (the accepted uniform of the private seminary), he sallied forth at morn accompanied by a nurse or a parent and walked (or was pulled) two blocks to a corner where the school bus made a flag stop. This flashy vehicle was as punctual as death: seeing us waiting at the cold curb, it would sweep to a halt, open its mouth, suck the boy in, and spring away with an angry growl. It was a good deal like a train picking up a bag of mail. At school the scholar was worked on for six or seven hours by half a dozen teachers and a nurse, and was revived on orange juice in midmorning. In a cinder court he played games supervised by an athletic instructor, and in a cafeteria he ate lunch worked out by a dietitian.

Paragraph 2

His days followed a set routine. He wore overalls and an old sweater, as everyone else did in his school. In the morning, a parent or nurse walked the two blocks with him to the corner where he met the school bus. The bus was always on time. During the six or seven hours of the school day, he had six teachers. The school also employed a nurse and a dietitian. Games were supervised. The children ate in the cafeteria. Orange juice was served during the morning session.

1. What impressions of the school do you get from thinking of the clothing as an "accepted uniform" rather than as what "everyone else" wears?
2. What do you learn about the boy's attitude toward the school from the first paragraph which you do not learn from the second?
3. In the first paragraph, what is the purpose of the words used in speaking of the bus? Quote some of the words and phrases used, and discuss the effect they have in creating images and ideas in the reader's mind.
4. The first paragraph tells that the boy was "worked on...by half a dozen teachers and a nurse." The second tells that he "had six teachers." What difference does the change in wording make in your impression of the way the school staff regards the students?
5. Why is it important to the general effect of the first paragraph to know that the games are supervised by an athletic director and that the meals are planned by a dietitian?
6. Explain why paragraph 1 is more effective and interesting than paragraph 2. Show how particular words, phrases, and sentences create pictures and ideas for the reader.

Follow the same directions for this excerpt from “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” by Ernest Hemingway.

	Technique	Effect
<p>1. It had taken a strange chance of hunting, a sudden precipitation into action without opportunity for worrying beforehand, to bring this about with Macomber, but regardless of how it had happened it had most certainly happened. 2. Look at the beggar now, Wilson thought. 3. It's that some of them stay little boys so long, Wilson thought. 4. Sometimes all their lives. 5. Their figures stay boyish when they're fifty. 6. The great American boy-men. 7. Damned strange people. 8. But he liked this Macomber now. 9.. Damn strange fellow. 10. Probably meant the end of cuckoldry too. 11. Well, that would be a damned good thing. 12. Damned good thing. 13. Beggar had probably been afraid all his life. 14. Don't know what started it. 15. But over now. 16. Hadn't had time to be afraid with the buff. 17. That and being angry too. 18. Motor car too. 19. Motor cars made it familiar. 20. Be a damn fire eater now. 21. He'd seen it in the war work the same way. 22. More of a change than any loss of virginity. 23. Fear gone like an operation. 24. Something else grew in its place. 25. Main thing a man had. 26. Women knew it too. 27. No bloody fear.</p>		

#1

Erik Larson, in his chapter, "Somewhere, a Butterfly" uses syntax and diction to create a scene rich with the heat and foreboding of a pending hurricane. Larson often uses simple and natural diction to convey an unforced feel to his book and to reflect the natural origins of a hurricane. Instead of using scientific words, Larson will sometimes substitute a different word, giving the particular phrase a more poetic feel. For example, he uses the words "...the first layer of sky..." which creates a dreamier undertone than if the word atmosphere would have been used. Simple language is also employed by an author to set apart a particularly important idea in the hopes that it will get noticed for the way it is written. Larson uses this technique when ending some of his paragraphs. "The waters of the Gulf got hot." He declares; the sentence is clean and straightforward. It is noticeable for those very reasons, which is what Larson intended; and creates a sense of foreboding, and a contrast with the other, more descriptive phrases. Although natural and simple language is often employed by Larson, much of his writing is overly poetic. Sunny Delaney of amazon.com eloquently comments, "At times, the prose is a bit too purple..." What Larson lacks in prose, he makes up for in his use of sentence structure. With an accomplished command of syntax, he creates a feeling of apprehension in this selection. To relay the feeling of dread associated with the commencement of the worst natural disaster of our time, he uses short, choppy sentences, which can make a reader anxious. Short sentences and asyndeton not only create feelings of apprehension or anticipation, but also force attention to what is being said. The awkward way choppy phrases, clauses, and sentences sound draws attention to the words, and the difficulty of reading short sentences or those without conjunctions causes a reader to slow down, and contemplate while pronouncing the phrase. In one section of this selection, Larson uses asyndeton and three one-word sentences in a row. For some reason, Larson wants his readers to pay particular attention to, or fear, "...cordite, ether, urine, dung. Coffee. Bacon. Sweat." A third reason Larson uses so many short sentences is to relate the feeling of sluggishness associated with unbearable heat. It is while talking about the 100-degree temperature in Philadelphia during August 1900 in which he strings together seven short sentences. Overall, Larson does a credible job at calling forth the image of a brewing storm through his use of simple language and asyndeton.

#2

According to Larson the building storm has beauty, power, and complexity. Through soft diction such as "the earth's soul" Larson implies the storm's beauty by implying its necessary relationship to the rest of the world and life. With the epistrophes repeating hot over and over again Larson's use of syntax implies power; using the connotations of "powerful Saharan wind, turbulence, and driving rain," Larson further implies the storm's power via his diction. And the storm's complexity becomes apparent with the mounting objective words such as "temperatures," "latitude," and "hot spell" all pointing towards an intricate scientific mixture. With the grace and style of Larson's diction and syntax he demonstrates the building storm's power, beauty, and complexity.

Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, Corbett and Connors, 1999.
Excerpted and adapted from Chapter IV "Style"

I. Imitation

Classical rhetoric books are filled with testimonies about the value of imitation for the refinement of the many skills involved in effective speaking or writing. Style is, after all, the most imitable of the skills that cooperate to produce effective discourse.

Rhetoricians recommended a variety of exercises to promote conscious imitation.

[A] common practice was to set the students the task of saying something in a variety of ways. This process usually started out with a model sentence, which had to be converted into a variety of forms each retaining the basic thought of the original. Erasmus showed the students 150 ways of phrasing the sentence, originally written in Latin, "Your letter has delighted me very much." The variety was achieved partly by the choice of different words, partly by different collocations of words. Here, in English, is a sampling of Erasmus's reworkings:

Your epistle has cheered me greatly.

Your note has been the occasion of unusual pleasure for me.

When your letter came, I was seized with an extraordinary pleasure.

What you wrote to me was most delightful.

On reading your letter, I was filled with joy.

Your letter provided me with no little pleasure.

By artificially experimenting with various forms, students became aware of the flexibility of the language in which they were working and learned to extend their own range. Ultimately they learned that although there is a variety of ways of saying something, there is a "best way" for their particular subject matter, occasion, or audience. What was "best" for one occasion or audience, they discovered, is not "best" for another occasion or audience.

You will have the opportunity to practice two kinds of imitation—copying passages of prose and imitating various sentence patterns. But first, read the testimony of Malcolm X about how he learned to write.

Copying Passages

The first exercise in imitation ... consists of copying passages word for word, from admired authors. This may strike you as being a rather brainless exercise, but it can teach you a great deal about the niceties of style. We pointed out a number of features one looks for when one makes a close study of style. These features will strike you as you carefully transcribe the passage.

If you are to derive any benefit from this exercise, you must observe a few simple rules.

1. **You must not spend more than fifteen or twenty minutes copying at any one time.** If you extend this exercise much beyond twenty minutes at any one sitting, your attention will begin to wander, and you will find yourself merely copying words.
2. **You must do this copying with a pencil or pen.** Typing is so fast and so mechanical that you can copy off whole passages without paying any attention to the features of an author's style. Copying by hand, you transcribe the passage at such a pace that you have time to observe the choice and disposition of words, the patterns of sentences, and the length and variety of sentences.
3. **You must not spend too much time with any one author.** If you concentrate on a single author's style, you may find yourself falling into that "servile imitation" that rhetoricians warned of. The aim of this exercise is not to acquire someone else's style but to lay the groundwork for developing your own style by getting the "feel" of a variety of styles.
4. **You must read the entire passage before starting to copy it so that you can capture the thought and manner of the passage as a whole.** When you are copying, it is advisable to read each sentence through before transcribing it. After you have finished copying the passage, you should read your transcription so that you once again get a sense of the passage as a whole.
5. **You must copy the passage slowly and accurately.** If you are going to dash through this exercise, you might as well not do it at all. A mechanical way of insuring accuracy and the proper pace is to make your handwriting as legible as you can.

You will derive the maximum benefit from this copying exercise if you practice it over an extended period of time. Transcribing a single different passage every day for a month will prove more beneficial to you than transcribing several different pages every day for a week. You must have time to absorb what you have been observing in this exercise; and you will not have time to absorb the many lessons to be learned from this exercise if you cram it into a short period.

N. Scott Momaday

Although my grandmother lived out her long life in the shadow of Rainy Mountain, the immense landscape of the continental interior lay like memory in her blood. She could tell of the Crows, whom she had never seen, and of the Black Hills, where she had never been. I wanted to see in reality what she had seen more perfectly in the mind's eye, and travelled fifteen hundred miles to begin my pilgrimage.

Yellowstone, it seemed to me, was the top of the world, a region of deep lakes and dark timber, canyons and waterfalls. But, beautiful as it is, one might have the sense of confinement there. The skyline in all directions is close at hand, the high wall of the woods and deep cleavages of shade. There is a perfect freedom in the mountains, but it belongs to the eagle and the elk, the badger and the bear. The Kiowas reckoned their stature by the distance they could see, and they were bent and blind in the wilderness.

The Way to Rainy Mountain, 1967, 1969.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

Letter from Birmingham Jail
16 April 1963

MODEL SENTENCE: You want to live out that age-old yearning, portrayed in myths and legends of every culture, to step above the Earth and see the whole world fidgeting and blooming below you. —Dianne Ackerman, "The Round Walls of Home," *A Natural History of the Senses*.

YOUR IMITATION:

MODEL SENTENCE: I have ever considered you in the light of *civil* acquaintance – on the word friend I lay a peculiar emphasis – and, as a mere acquaintance, you were rude and *cruel*, to step forward to insult a woman, whose conduct and misfortune demand respect. –Mary Wollstonecraft, Letter 1795

YOUR IMITATION:

MODEL SENTENCE: Every man stood firm; and at our last meeting, we pledged ourselves afresh, in the most solemn manner, that, at the time appointed, we would certainly start in pursuit of freedom. –Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

YOUR IMITATION:

MODEL SENTENCE: An active field of science is like an immense intellectual anthill; the individual almost vanishes into the mass of minds tumbling over each other, carrying information from place to place, passing it around at the speed of light. —Lewis Thomas, "Natural Science," *The Lives of a Cell*

YOUR IMITATION:

ALTERNATE EXPRESSIONS:

MODEL SENTENCE: I have ever considered you in the light of *civil* acquaintance – on the word friend I lay a peculiar emphasis – and, as a mere acquaintance, you were rude and *cruel*, to step forward to insult a woman, whose conduct and misfortune demand respect. –Mary Wollstonecraft, Letter 1795

I consider you in the light of a civil acquaintance.
On the word friend I lay a peculiar emphasis.
As a mere acquaintance, you were rude and cruel.
You insulted a woman.
The woman's conduct and misfortune demand respect.

VARIATION OF THE PATTERN:

ALTERNATE EXPRESSIONS:

All of these exercises in imitation—copying passages, writing original sentences according to pattern, varying the pattern of a model sentence, and devising alternate expressions for the same thought—can teach you a number of valuable lessons:

- (1) They can make you aware of the variety of resources that your language offers;
 - (2) They can afford you practice in choosing apt words and collocating them in various ways;
 - (3) They can teach you that not every variation is equally clear, graceful, or appropriate;
 - (4) They can teach you that variation of the pattern of the sentence often results in a different *effect* and that an alternate expression often results in a different *meaning*.
- The ultimate goal of imitation exercises, however, is eventually to cut you loose from your models, equipped with the competence and resources to go at it on your own.**